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BRIEF NOTES ON
THE STATE OF PARÁ
AND ITS RESOURCES.

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THE
STATE OF PARÁ.

On the declaration of the Republic in 1899, Pará became an autonomous State of the United States of Brazil, governed by a Constitution of its own.

The Constitutional powers consist of a Legislative, Executive and Judiciary. The Legislature is composed of two Chambers of Deputies and Senators that meet every year. Congress cannot be dissolved. Each Legislature lasts three years. All Bills concerning taxation, fixation of forces and proposals of the Executive must be first discussed by the Deputies.

Amongst the functions of Congress are the Scrutiny of the election of Governors and Vice-Governors, creation of all taxes, authorisation to contract loans and other credit operations, and to fix annual expenditure, grant subsidies or guarantees, legislate with regard to the public debt and provide for its payment, as also with regard to the Rivers of the State; to annul proceedings of the Municipalities not in accordance with the Law, and provide for education and the preservation of public order.

Executive powers are exercised exclusively by the Governor, who is substituted in case of impediment by the Vice-Governor, the President of the Senate, President of the Chambers of Deputies, or the President of the High Court of Justice, in rotation.

Amongst the functions of the Executive are: promulgation of Laws by decree and regulation of same; to provide for vacancies in the Civil and Military services; to report to and advise Congress; to prorogue sessions of Congress and summon extraordinary sessions; to appoint magistrates and judges; to mobilise forces for the maintenance of order; to present Bills for discussion in Congress, etc. etc.

The Judicial Body consists of the High Court of Justice, which is composed of seven members, called Desembargadores, Law Judges and Substitutes, the Jury for decision of criminal cases, and Correctional Tribunals. There is also a Public Ministry presided over by an Attorney General whose office is to defend before the Courts the interests of the State, of Justice, of Orphans, absentees, interdicted persons, and of creditors of Bankrupt estates.

At the end of every twelve years, Congress must revise the Constitution so as to make sure that it cannot be improved by modification. The date of the next revision will be 1915.

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In the Federal Congress of the Republic, the State is represented by three Senators elected for a period of nine years, and by seven Deputies elected for three years.

State Finances :—It was more than natural that in a State like Pará, counting mainly on India-Rubber as its source of revenue, the financial conditions should be son ewhat disorganised by the large decrease in the value of this product owing to the competition from the Far East. Nevertheless, the physical properties of our article will always be appreciated by the manufacturers, and it is wonderful how an extractive industry like ours has shown all the resistence to such a tremendous fall in prices by coming into the primary markets—Pará and Manaos—in large quantities still, and everything points to the fact that as soon as the bad effects of the present crisis are past, the prevailing low prices not only will change the methods of trading but will mean larger crops. Therefore a new era of prosperity is close at hand for the Amazon region.

The City of Pará :—The City of Pará, capital of the State, is situated on the right bank of the River Pará—also known by the name of Guajará—and is within 138 kilometers—say 85 miles—of the Atlantic Ocean. It has fine Government Buildings as well as private mansions of elegant style and architectural beauty. Besides the State schools, the Municipality of Pará provides for several primary schools in the Capital and the Suburbs.

The Squares of the City are really spots of beauty, kept scrupulously clean, well supplied with fine gardens and trees, which, while adding to the charm of the City, exercise a beneficial effect over the public health. The streets are all well paved and several new streets have recently been added. The cleaning and general looking after of the streets and squares are carried out by the Municipality.

There is a good electric tram service which is in the hands of an English Company—"The Pará Electric and Lighting Co., Ltd."

Life in Pará is comparatively not more expensive than in most European Capitals. Everything can be had in Pará.

The population of the city has increased by leaps and bounds, being now estimated at one hundred and fifty thousand.

Climate of Pará:—The climate is warm and damp, but the mercury never reaches the height of many European towns in the summer. The heat is temperate, but never excessive, owing to the frequent rains, and the proximity of the rivers and the "trade" winds. Pará, notwithstanding its geographical position below the Equator, is cooler and much healthier than is generally imagined, the mean temperature being between 79 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit

The Amazon is the land of perpetual summer. Although the climate is believed abroad to be unhealthy, this is not the case, as really the heat is not nearly as great as in India, owing to the heavy rainfalls and no burning drought. The country is fertile and salubrious, everything sprouting and growing rapidly. The soil has been enriched by layers of vegetable matter during thousands of years. Vegetation is in perpetual activity, there being no rest. Such conditions make the climate of the Amazon Valley one of the healthiest in the world.

With regard to tropical diseases, it is time to correct the erroneous opinions held abroad. There are in every part of the world diseases which are extremely deadly, but which in Brazil, and particularly in the State of Pará, may be said to be almost unknown, such as cancer, appendicitis, etc. Typhoid fever is prevalent in Spain, and Malaria in Italy, and they are more dangerous in those countries than in Brazil. The State of Pará has completely freed herself from Yellow Fever which for over half a century had given her a bad reputation, and this disease no longer figures in the hospital returns. Sunstroke is an unknown occurrence in Pará. In fact, one may safely say that in Brazil there are no diseases peculiar to the country. No disease has yet had its origin amongst us, nor been exported by us to other countries. Malaria and Beri-Beri which for many years had been the diseases most in evidence, have practically disappeared owing to the great improvements made in sanitary conditions. That longevity is still amongst us, as of old, is proved by the census of 1906 in which Rio de Janeiro figures as possessing 178 centenarians, a number unequalled in any great city. Pará may be well proud of its climate and it has been proved by statistics that it is one of the healthiest in the world, its death rate being far below that of several European cities.

Produce.—The wealth to be derived from the Flora of Pará is incalculable. The following are some of the articles which yield, or may be made to yield, considerable returns to enterprising commercial men :—

Fibres.—The Piassava, a well-known fibre used for making brushes, brooms, etc. The Bassu or Uavassu—"Manicaria succifera"—also a capital fibre for the same purposes. The Inayá—"Maximilliana Regia"—which has very thin and resistant filaments, useful for basket making. The Tucuman—"Astrocartium Tucuma"—a first class fibre, commanding a good price when made into string and hammocks, and other fibres.

Medicinal Plants.—The Quinquinna of the Forest, which is found in great abundance in Marajó. The Quassia, which is a valuable tonic. The Guaraná, which has already found its way in prescriptions signed by European Doctors. The Marapuama, a better tonic and stimulant than the Kola Nut. The Sarsaparilla, universally employed as a blood cleanser. The Manacá, which is known as vegetable mercury. The Assacú, a caustic plant much used by veterinary surgeons. The Ipecacuanha, one of the best known emetics. Jaborandi Leaves, a powerful diaphoretic, known all over the world, and many, many others.

Gum, Resin, and other Trees.—The Carajuru, produces an excellent red ink; it is exported in powder. Dragons Blood, a colouring matter very useful for varnishing wood. The Urucú—"Bixa Orellana-Bixaceæ"—which is used as a spice; dyers greatly appreciate the pulp of this wood; it is exported abroad in paste form. The Genipapo—"Genipa Braziliensis"—produces a magnificent violet ink, and with the fruit of this tree a delicious liquor can be made, also a good wine, both tonic and invigorating, well known as a cure for anæmia. The Angico and the Copal, which can be used instead of Arabian gum with better results. The Bois d'Encens—"Protium Guyanensis"—a valuable resin, which, so far, has been little exported. The Almacegueira—"Hedwigia

balsamifera"--which is largely used in Pará for stopping chinks in boats. Tonka Beans are greatly appreciated by manufacturers of perfumes, tobacco, etc.; when added to tobacco, it imparts a delicious aroma to same. The Vanilla—"Vanilla Aromatica"—and the "Cravinho Falso," or false cinnamon, which are valuable plants out of which good profits can be made. Oil of Andiroba, an excellent lubricant.

Isinglass.—an industry which yields an ever increasing profit. There are quite a large number of fishes suitable for the extraction of this article, but the Gurujuba—"silurus"—is the best. This article is largely exported.

Balsam Capivi.—is well known all over the world.

Castor Oil.—The castor seed plant is abundant all over the State.

Carnauba Wax.—This wax is generally used in the country for lighting purposes, by being made into candles, which, although of an inferior quality, last a long time, but abroad it is largely used for waxing and polishing furniture, floors, etc.

The exportation of Birds' feathers also constitutes for Pará a source of revenue, not to be despised. Aigrette feathers are those which fetch the best prices.

Agriculture.—Cotton which has not been cultivated in Pará for some time past, is now being generally planted and excellent results are looked for in the very near future.

All kinds of cereals, such as maize, rice, beans, etc. are successfully grown in the State.

Tobacco.—Is largely cultivated in the State.

Cocoa.—Is easily cultivated and gives much less work than Coffee or Sugar Cane. The climate is admirably adapted for the cultivation of the Cocoa tree and if we take into account that it requires next to no capital, it will be seen that the profit to be derived from this article is very important. Our cocoa is equal to the best in the market and if in Europe it does not fetch the same price as Caracas Cocoa, it is due to the lack of care exercised by the gatherers during the drying operation, but when they make up their mind to bestow more attention and care to this operation, our cocoa will undoubtedly be considered quite as fine as Caracas cocoa, which, it must be admitted, is the best obtainable.

Brazil Nuts.—The Brazil Nut tree is found in great abundance all over the State, but it has so far been little exploited in many of the districts. The Savoury Nut is the fruit of an enormous tree about 50 metres high—say 164 feet—which is found in clusters, more or less dense, in the forest clad lands of moderate altitude. The great spherical fruit ripens during the rainy season—January to March—and drops to the ground; the nut is contained in pods which have to be split open with an axe, each pod having from 15 to 30 nuts. The fruit is in great demand all over the world and Pará has an inexhaustible supply in districts which are not yet inhabited and are known only to few men.

Ucuhuba Kernels.—The State is also abundant in oleaginous kernels and we may mention, for instance, the "Ucuhuba Kernel" which is in great demand by soap manufacturers on account of the large percentage of saponification value. There are of course many others which can find a free market abroad and there is no doubt that with the present low value of rubber, the natives will devote themselves more to the gathering of these kernels, thus adding still further to the vast resources of our State.

Cokernuts.—The Government is giving great facilities for the cultivation of the Cokernut palm and there are already large plantations in existence. In the near future, the State of Pará will be one of the largest producers of these nuts.

India-Rubber.—Has been and is still our chief source of revenue and the fruitful element of commercial progress in a country where it has held the first place among so many rich products.

Indeed, no doubt can be entertained on this point. It is a well known fact that India-rubber has been the most powerful agent of commercial wealth in a State which exports about a third of the total products of Brazil.

Pará has never ceased being the first land in the world for the production of the finest quality of India-Rubber, an article which is steadily growing in demand, as various and important uses for same are constantly being discovered.

We have much to learn in the way of properly treating our produce, but by degrees our antiquated methods are being improved upon and also substituted by more efficacious processes, which will undoubtedly enable our Rubber to defy competition as regards its sterling qualities.

Our Rubber is admittedly much stronger and much more elastic than that produced in the East, and it follows as a matter of course, that, when we prepare it free from all impurities, avoiding inferior grades, its value will be considerably enhanced.

As stated by those who best know the State of Pará, as for instance Mr. J. A. Mendes, the distinguished and able commercial authority (whose capital work, "The Amazonian Crisis" is well worth reading): "Let Pará India-rubber be made free from all foreign matters and our loss in weight will cease to be enormous and we shall be able to obtain better value for our produce."

The fall in price need cause no alarm whatever. It is a misfortune—and a great one—but it may be that the present evil will lead to great good in the near future. Indeed, the more this crisis is felt now, the better we shall understand the necessity of struggling against serious competition, by improving our methods of preparing the product, attending to the cultivation of the Hevea, etc. We are able to successfully grow the tree in every part of our State with the greatest ease, and the production of the article can be doubled without much effort or outlay.

Our forests contain nearly all the different kinds of elastic gum ; from those which supply the best qualities--or the greatest quantities--like the various kinds of Heveas, castilloas and several sapiums--to those which yield less or are of an inferior quality, such as the Landolphius down to the Gutta plants : Massarandubas, Pindares, Bolatas, etc. It is, however, to the Hevea that this rich valley owes its wide reputation and supremacy in the India-Rubber producing world.

In our immense territory—more than half the size of Europe--the Hevea tree grows spontaneously ; it thrives and develops into clumps without any other care than that which our rich soil and climate bestow upon it. However, by cultivating the Hevea nearer to our port, which is an easy matter, the cost of collecting and transporting would be far less expensive and arduous and consequently it would be much more remunerative.

Among the numerous difficulties with which we have to contend, the most ruinous is the endless chain of middle men, through which our produce has to pass before reaching the consumer or manufacturer. We are convinced that no time should be lost in calling upon the most influential "aviadores" to unite, in order to look after their best interests, which make it imperative, by their combined efforts at Pará and Manaos, to get into direct communication with the manufacturers, and to study their needs closely in all matters pertaining to India-rubber. It is clearly the only practical means by which we can recover our commercial independence, and free ourselves from the middle man whose profits are well nigh incalculable, and whose intervention raises or lowers the price of the product at will, thus placing our article at a disadvantage.

Caucho.—Castilloa elastica—A large amount of Caucho is produced in several districts of our State and the present output can be easily increased. This rubber is outwardly jet black, with a yellowish hue inside and a number of little cells ; its smell is pungent, rather disagreeable, and very different to the India-rubber obtained from the "Seringueira." It is inferior in quality but still highly prized by the manufacturers. This tree is found all over the State and especially in dry lands of moderate altitude.

We have demonstrated that in our State there are abundant crops of India-rubber. But there are also many other trees producing "Latex," and all of these, whether they yield Maniçoba, Mangabeira, Castilloa or Hevea provide ample returns to exporters, but the great wealth of the State is unquestionably the India-rubber collected from the "Seringueira," the valuable produce we call "Hevea" and our Caucho, the superior quantity and quality of which are not to be matched.

Unfortunately, at present India-rubber is heavily handicapped by excessive export duties and crushing freight rates. There is, perhaps, no other country in the world which has to pay as much for conveying its merchandise or produce, consequently increasing the cost of living, although everything is being done in order to remedy these conditions.

Cattle Breeding.—This industry has considerably developed in some of the districts of the State There are excellent prairies for breeding purposes and the island of Marajó alone is capable not only of supplying the whole Amazon Valley with all the cattle, horses and mules needed, but it will also be able to, shortly, export thousands of head. The date is not far off when the State will be able to do a prosperous trade in hides, live stock, salted and frozen meats as in the Argentine Republic.

With the object of fostering this industry, an institution has been founded, the special aim of which is to inculcate new methods of breeding, such as crossing the indigenous stock with the best specimens of imported cattle, etc., etc.

Industries.—Although in Pará the industrial development has not progressed so rapidly as its commerce, yet it is undeniable that great strides have been made in various departments of our local industries. Waterproof materials, riding boots, etc. were manufactured from our India-rubber before rubber extracting had developed on such a large scale, but this industry has since been given up. However, other businesses are constantly being started and some of them add considerably to the prosperity of the State. We would mention specially the great progress made in all matters relating to building.

Clay goods and earthenware are produced to a large extent, such as bricks, tiles, water pipes, etc., employing a great number of men.

There are Steam Saw Mills, not only in the Capital, but also wherever timber is needed by builders, joiners, etc.

There are any amount of curious kinds of wood in Pará. The best known number about 202, which may be divided into three classes : the first consisting of 86 kinds, is suitable for building purposes, boat building, etc. ; the second, consisting of 43 kinds, is used by ordinary joiners, and the third, comprising 73 kinds, is fit for light work such as travelling trunks, boxes, etc.

Of these 202 kinds of wood, we would mention the following as those which command the best prices :—

The Acapú.
The Yellow Wood.
The Andiroba.
The Cupiuba.
The Red Laurel.
The Yellow Laurel.
The Cinnamon.
The Pepper Tree.
The Beech.
The Matamatá.
The Tamanqueira.
The Marupá.
The Red Cedar.
The White Cedar.
The Massaranduba.
The Jarana.
The Frei-Jorge.
The Piquiá.
The Quaruba.
The Ucuhuba.
The Mandioqueira.
The Violet Wood.
The Sicopira.

Acapú and yellow wood combined are of great strength. They are always selected in Pará for the flooring and panelling of good buildings. Indeed, they are the distinctive feature of the best houses, not only in Pará but also in Rio de Janeiro, where the private mansions all have the floors made of these woods.

In Europe and the United States of North America woods of fine quality are getting scarce and very soon Pará woods will be in great demand in both continents.

In Lisbon there are already many houses which are pointed out as models of luxury because their floors are marvels of excellent designs obtained solely by using our acapú and yellow wood.

Railways.—There is only one Railway Company owned by the State of Pará and connecting the Capital with the most important districts, but, of course, our main source of communication with the interior is through the innumerable rivers, by modern steamers and launches.

Water Supply.—In 1901 the water supply available was not sufficient for the population and therefore expensive machinery was obtained, large reservoirs were built, by which means there is now an abundant supply, even in the driest months of the year.

Amongst the Public Buildings in Pará, the following are worth special notice :—

The Governor's Palace, a sumptuous edifice over a century old and one of the finest monuments which can be seen anywhere.

The "Theatro da Paz" :—a splendid building, decorated with taste and greatly embellished by choice Pará woods, skilfully inlaid and producing a most pleasing effect. As regards accommodation, this theatre might well be taken as a model by many of the best known houses all over the world.

The Goeldi Museum—Pará Museum of Natural History and Ethnology—enjoys world wide reputation ; it has lately been brought completely up-to-date and thoroughly answers the purpose for which it was intended. Its collections pertaining to Natural History are most valuable. In the Ethnographical section there are numerous collections of pottery which was used by the extinct tribe of Marajó Indians and those from Brazilian Guyana.

The Institute "Gentil Bittencourt" is a fine edifice used as a professional school for girls ; its style is Ionic.

The Prata Institute is a modern technical school for boys and the **"Lauro Sodré"** Institute is also an important establishment for educational purposes.

Our Aim in the above Short Notes has been to make the reader acquainted with the extent and variety of our resources, etc., and to put an end, finally, to the undeserved reputation which our climate has had for unhealthiness.

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